

Action research communities for language teachers

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www.ecml.at/actionresearch



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Project aims

- To make techniques for action research widely available to language teachers through the establishment of a community of practice
- To strengthen professional networks by linking academic expertise on action research & good practice in the language classroom
- To contribute to improvements in language education by giving teachers across Europe better access to action research
- To enable teachers to reflect on practice & to propose & test innovations within a community of practice



Project objectives

- To design action research tools which help to improve the quality of teaching & foster dialogue between teachers in different sectors
- To show how undertaking action research is beneficial to teachers & learners
- To create European models for peer learning activities which can be implemented at school/national level



What is action research?

Many definitions

- “Educational Action Research involves teachers making & creating *educationally* worthwhile changes in their classrooms & other learning environments”(Elliott, 2011: 1)
- Action research is a “a paradigm, a methodology & a ‘practice-changing practice’ that requires a commitment to non-negotiable, quality of life-enhancing values” (Zuber-Skerritt 2012, xi)

Action research involves:

- Planning, then making a change, and then reviewing the situation to generate learning (Lewin 1946)
- Collecting data - often interviews, observations, reflections on practice, questionnaires, assessments etc.



Why do action research?

- Teachers develop skills in thinking systematically about what happens in the classroom & implement action where they can improve things (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982)
- Helps teachers to empower themselves to make and create change (Elliott, 2011)
- Collaborative process so helps teachers to feel less isolated (Burns, 2005)
- Positions teachers as active producers of knowledge (Wennergren, 2016)



Project team

Christine Lechner, Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol

- Co-ordinator

Brynhildur Ragnarsdóttir, Language Centre, Reykjavik

- Web-site correspondent

Angela Gallagher-Brett, SOAS, University of London

- Communications person

Tita Mihaiu, [Centrul pentru formarea continuă în limba germană \(CPD\)](#)

- Second language documentalist

- Associate partners: Renata Zanin, Jim Murphy, Anita Konrad, Melanie Steiner, Marianne Jacquin



What we've done

- Networking & discussions at regional levels of partners
- First workshop during International Week at Pedagogical University Tirol
- Action Research Workshop for German teachers in Sibiu / Hermannstadt October 2016
- Action Research Workshop in Graz November 2016





Graz workshop participants



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Graz workshop mini-projects: research topics

- Does an explicit focus on critical thinking skills in our lesson planning and instruction enable students to engage in critical thinking? (**Participating countries: Albania, Netherlands, Malta, Latvia**)
- How can pupils' language skills be enhanced by using news media and Facebook sharing in language teaching? (**Croatia, Iceland**)
- Breaking barriers: Can we identify barriers for professional learning English as a second language at university level? (**Armenia, France**)
- What is the role of the teacher in university student-centred activities? (**Finland, France**)
- How does teaching vocabulary learning strategies contribute to learner autonomy in CLIL & MFL classrooms? (**Ireland**)
- Improving target language use in German lessons (**Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Romania**)
- Using the European Portfolio of Student Teachers of Languages (**EPOSTL**) as a self-reflection tool for improving pre- and in-service teachers' competences. (**Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Greece**)
- Challenges of CLIL teachers (**Czech Republic, Poland**)
- CLIL in secondary vocational schools seen through students' perspectives. (**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia**)
- Intercultural projects in English lessons (**Austria, Denmark, Montenegro**)
- The teacher as co-constructor of knowledge (**Bulgaria, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Slovenia**)



Workshop Follow-up

- Collaborative action research projects developed and carried out by workshop participants
- Dialogue throughout the year with project team acting as critical friends
- Abstracts published on project web-page:
<http://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/Professionallearningcommunities/Results/tabid/3040/language/en-GB/Default.aspx> & full project reports shared on a Padlet wall
- Project team working on action research tools for language teachers
- All results to be shared at network meeting in Graz in May



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Project website

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